



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 22, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Mike Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Presentation on Reward Schools: Beating the Odds

In 2010, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) began recognizing individual school success stories through the "Beating the Odds" initiative. This program recognizes Michigan schools that are finding ways to overcome identifiable risk factors associated with low student achievement, such as economic status, race and ethnicity, or proficiency with the English language.

With the approval of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, Michigan is now recognizing three types of Reward schools:

- High Performing Schools: These are schools in the top 5 percent of the Top-to- Bottom list. This high rank indicates that schools demonstrate strong achievement on state assessments in all five core subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies), are improving over time, and are closing the achievement gaps.
- High Progress Schools: These schools are the schools that are showing significant improvement and sustaining this growth over several years. These schools may or may not be demonstrating the highest achievement, but they have made significant progress in terms of increasing student achievement.
- Beating the Odds Schools: These are schools whose achievement exceeds expectations or predictions based on the demographic characteristics of the schools and students. The MDE uses the same methodology for identifying the Beating the Odds Reward schools as it has since 2010.

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In August 2012, the MDE announced a list of Reward Schools that earned this status through either overall high performance or high progress. The Beating the Odds (BTO) schools reflect the third path into the Reward School designation. Some Beating the Odds Reward schools also are High Performing or High Progress Reward schools.

There are a total of 344 Reward schools:

- 44 schools are both Beating the Odds and High Performing
- 32 schools are both Beating the Odds and High Progress
- 58 schools are Beating the Odds only
- 99 schools are High Performing only
- 111 schools are High Progress only

An initial analysis of the Reward schools shows that these schools are quite representative of all schools in the state. For example, they represent the full range of poverty in Michigan schools with 158 receiving Title I funds, 62 are Title I eligible and 124 are not receiving Title I funds. There are reward schools in urban, rural and suburban communities with a diversity of student population demographics.

In October 2012, the MDE surveyed the BTO Reward School principals and district superintendents about factors that may have contributed to their ability to “beat the odds.” These results will support different strategies that schools can use to increase student achievement for all students and tell a story about each BTO Reward school. An overview of the Reward Schools and results of the survey will be presented at the November 20, 2012, State Board of Education meeting.